

National Catholic Theatre Conference

PRODUCTION CALENDAR

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MAY PRODUCTION CALENDAR

May's Production Calendar will be extra special for several reasons. The Executive Board has sanctioned printing as a test case that we may have some actual experience to present to the members in a discussion of permanent printing arrangements.

This means more material may be included but an earlier deadline must be observed. Items for the Calendar must be received by April 15. To the publicity managers and reporters of groups closed for Easter vacation we direct an appeal for news items of May and June events. As many copies as our paper supply allows will be run, to be used for publicity later. At least 100 of our 250 groups will be producing plays during these last two months of the season. Won't you tell us about yours so your group will be represented in this special pre-Convention issue?

The Calendar will also include the Nominating Committee's slate for election, the constitutional provisions governing the business meeting, proxies, and other items important to members at this time. Plus, of course, the latest Convention news.

CONVENTION PUBLICITY

Sister Mary Honora, O.P., Publicity Chairman, has already appealed to members to acquaint others working in theatre with the Conference and its National Convention. Your personal approach to teachers and directors in your neighborhood will guarantee this publicity a hearing, and can attract to the Convention a selected audience which will most readily implement the principles and techniques advanced. Those who speak at the Convention will contribute a small part to the final success - those who hear them and work at the ideas and ideals throughout the country next year and the years after will determine the worth of this undertaking.

The programs of the Convention will be distributed by mail the middle of this month to members and to the Provincials and Superiors who requested information regarding the meeting. If you need to use yours to convince a Catholic theatre worker in your neighborhood to attend, please feel free to do so; we can duplicate your copy when you come to Washington. Otherwise, we ask you to carry it with you to the Convention.

CONVENTION REGISTRATIONS are due BEFORE MAY 1st. Even if you are not planning to live on campus or to ask the Service Bureau to handle your hotel reservations, you should send your registration fee promptly if you wish to be counted among those who will attend sessions.

VITAL STATISTICS

Ten years ago this coming June, the meeting which gave birth to the Conference was held at Loyola Community Theatre in Chicago at Father Dinneen's invitation. 466 delegates from 26 states gathered - without any preliminary organization to spur attendance. Although Father Dinneen cannot be with us this June, he must be looking forward to the coming convention and measuring the achievement of ten years. What has been accomplished?

Last month's Calendar gave an idea of what has been achieved in regional activity; the Calendar itself on a regular publication schedule, our Bulletin, the Library - all these we can point to. But what is back of the 1947 figures of 245 group members plus almost 100 individual members from 37 states, several provinces of Canada, and Australia.

The Conference has a Service Bureau in New York which has run consecutively for six years under the roof and on a typewriter supplied by Blackfriars' Guild. Members' fees pay for the running expenses of the organization - printing, stationery, postage and office supplies, although in cases where special service is required the dues payment may not individually be adequate to cover expenses involved in servicing. But the Conference on its Tenth Birthday is yet dependent upon Blackfriars' for its office and upon its anonymous benefactor for a secretary's salary. At any moment either or both props might be withdrawn.

Is the membership old enough, strong enough to face these mortal alternatives? Is it so convinced of the worth of collaboration, of help to be given and received from each other that it will make the future of the organization secure?

The answer is not in numbers alone: at the December Executive Board Meeting it was estimated that 900 groups should guarantee an independent organization; by that time the Conference will need an office staff of three, an addressograph machine, and a bigger office than Blackfriars'. Nor is the answer simply a matter of dividing expenses by a set number of groups; those who can least afford high fees are most in need of the Conference.

What is your answer to the Conference's problem of security?

BOTH

If Conference members had to choose between Saturday and Sunday at the Convention, life would be hard - especially now that Jo Mielziner's "Lighting the Stage" session follows "First Place to the Playwright," which will present Walter Kerr, Emmet Lavery and Father Nagle on Saturday morning.

But delegates can look forward also to Sunday's full program with Solemn High Mass at the Shrine - Monsignor Reilly, National Director, will be Celebrant and the Carmelites will supply a choir - Communion Breakfast with Father Legault, director of the Compagnons de Saint Laurent of Montreal, as speaker and many notable guests, plus the afternoon's important periods.

Following the session "Festivals Can Help," the convention will break into units of working areas: Nap Sanchez, President of Catholic Theatre of Detroit will be Chairman of the Community Theatre session; Rev. Richard F. Grady, S.J. Head of Fordham's Division of Communication Arts, will be Chairman of the College and University session; Rev. John Lefko, C.P.P.S., of St. John Drama Club, Whiting, will head the CYO period; and Sister Mary Honora, O.P., of St. Catherine's High School has planned a profitable session for High School representatives.

All topped off by the business meeting Sunday evening which gives Conference members the opportunity to shape policies for the next two years. The 22nd of June will be important too.

CHORIC DRAMAS

Miriam Davenport Gow, currently directing a repeat production of Father Bonn's JOYFUL MYSTERY (see Cross-Country Circuit, Philadelphia), has sent us also the following titles as suggestions of choric dramas which have been used at Chestnut Hill College:

THE COMING OF CHRIST - John Masefield
AT THE WELL OF BETHLEHEM - Mona Swann
THE ACTS OF ST. PETER - Gordon Bottomley
CHRIST'S COMET - Christopher Hassell
THE ZEAL OF THY HOUSE - Dorothy Sayers
THE THREE YOUNG MEN IN THE FIERY FURNACE
and THE PRODIGAL SON, arranged,

And these for children by Agnes Curran Hamm, published by Tower Press, Milwaukee: LITTLE BLACK SAMBO, THE PIED PIPER, and THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

BROADWAY COMMENTS

By Mrs. Christopher Wyatt

BRIGADOON - Perfectly delightful musical play, full of imagination, about the Scotch village that comes to life every hundred years. The 18th Century atmosphere prevails rather unfortunately in the frank bawdiness of one of the characters. The dances by Agnes de Mille are triumphant, and so is the whole production. Extremely effective sets by Oliver Smith and costumes by David Ffolkes.

THE CHOCOLATE SOLDIER - So far as production is concerned, the Chocolate Soldier is in Class A, with sets and lighting by Jo Mielziner and costumes by Lucinda Ballard. Both the libretto, which is an adaptation of Shaw, and the music fall below modern standards, but for those who like the songs they are sung with good voices. Sex is the only joke.

THE EAGLE HAS TWO HEADS - A rather naive combination of Dunsany and Victor Hugo, with a part largely composed of monologues for Miss Bankhead, which she carries off with great spirit. The audience balks, however, at the attendant soliloquies. Very sumptuous sets by Donald Oenslager.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST - Superlative revival of Oscar Wilde's comedy by John Gielgud's company who transmit the Victorian era, its wit and elegancies. In their hands it seems a new play.

PUBLISHERS

I REMEMBER MAMA has been withdrawn from the amateur market everywhere pending completion of a new road tour which now plans to start from California in late summer. Dramatists Play Service will also control YEARS AGO, the current Ruth Gordon show, when it is available. That will be after the close of the New York show (no end in sight) and the road tour (depending upon Oscar-winning Frederick March's Hollywood commitments).

LUTE SONG, Michael Myerberg writes from Florida, is not available nor is any date for its release guessable.

Queen's Work has given the Library a copy of Father Lord's new musical MARY! MARY! (Quite Contrary). Publication date on CINDERELLA SINGS, another musical by Father Lord, has not been announced as yet.

CROSS-COUNTRY CIRCUIT - APRIL

Bird Island, Minn. - St. Mary's School will present THE SONG OF BERNADETTE on Apr. 20-21, under the direction of Sister Mary Ruth.

Davenport - JEANNE D'ARC will be given performances Apr. 11-12-13 by the Senior Cameo Players of Immaculate Conception Academy under the direction of Sister Mary Angelita, B.V.M.

Duluth - Three Senior Speech students at College of St. Scholastica will direct one-act plays to be produced on Sunday Evening, Apr. 27, as a traditional project of the Play Production and Direction course. Playmakers Guild members fill the casts.

La Crosse, Wis. - Aquinas High School and Sister Margaret Mary, undaunted by CYRANO late in February, are preparing PINAFORE for Apr. 20-21 performances.

Latrobe, Pa. - St. Vincent College will see THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF on Apr. 13, Father Conall's first major directing job.

Lynn, Mass. - Regis College Dramatic Society moves to Lynn to present a request performance of OUR HEARTS WERE YOUNG AND GAY for Catholic Charities, on Apr. 8.

New York - Fordham University offers a new translation of THE HOLY EXPERIMENT, a play written in German about the Jesuit Reductions in South America. Apr. 17--20.

Philadelphia - Mask and Foil Club of Chestnut Hill College at Town Hall on Apr. 17 offers a repeat performance of Father John Louis Bonn's JOYFUL MYSTERY.

St. Louis - Major production of St. Louis University Playhouse Club - MARY OF SCOTLAND - on Apr. 25-26-27. On Apr. 16, the Workshop will see UNCLE TOM'S CABIN.

Sinsinawa, Wis. - On Apr. 26 the Dramatic Art Guild of St. Clara Academy will present the premiere of a two act play on St. Catherine of Siena, MY NATURE IS FIRE, which has been developed and written by Guild members "in a style somewhat in the manner of Gheon's SAINT BERNARD."

West Hartford, Ct. - Queene's Company of St. Joseph College presents its QUEM QUERITIS on Apr. 11.

Wichita - Sister Mary Xavier's Mt. Carmel Academy Genesians have chosen REMEMBER THE DAY for production Apr. 28.

MARGIN NOTES

Pittsburgh's Catholic Theatre Guild checked up a big success in Walter Kerr's STARDUST, and may revive it post-Lent for parish tours.

From Sister Marcine, O.S.B., of the Ardeleons, College of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, Minn., we have borrowed a copy of Frederick de Jonge's translation of Henri Gheon's THE WAY OF THE CROSS, a part of his THE MYSTERY OF THE FINDING OF THE CROSS. Every effort is being made to duplicate the volume for the NCTC Library so Conference members may be able to consider it for Lenten programs next year.

Annual tradition at College of St. Scholastica requires a Lenten play produced by Playmakers Guild for the community "as a Holy Week meditation." Profits from RAMONA made it possible to offer THE UPPER ROOM on March 30 without charge. The College Choir collaborated on the production.

Father Donohue and Father Schroeder visited St. Clara Academy to hear a choral speaking adaptation of EXILE IN THE STARS last month, and we hear that Rosary College's verse choir is also basing a program on Father Donohue's book. (If you can borrow the March "Ecclesiastical Review," read the review appearing there.)

The verse choir at St. Mary-of-the-Wasatch abbreviated JOHN BROWN'S BODY for a quick-paced narrative on Mar. 5. Earlier this quarter the Campus Players presented for assembly the chief scenes of ESTHER in French, with English bridges supplied by a narrator.

Chestnut Hill College sponsored a one-act play program Feb. 28 in which St. Joseph's College offered THE GLITTERING GATE by Dunsany; La Salle gave BOUND EAST FOR CARDIFF by O'Neill; and Chest-

ANTI-REALIST

Father Guyon, O.Praem., could marshal no enthusiasm for his spring production at Central Catholic High School, Green Bay, Wis., until he found THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES (Charlotte Chorpenning's adaptation published by French), which he says offers "splendid opportunity for acting and pantomime as well as music for background. Dancing fits in beautifully, and the sets give ample room for imagination."

nut Hill presented Myrtle Grimes' JEANNE D'ARC.

Charles Costello, former NCTC Chairman will make a tour of twenty cities this summer for Te Deum, speaking on Catholic Action or the Liturgy. Mr. Costello is President of the Davenport Chapter and member of Te Deum's National Board.

By way of celebrating the most successful engagement yet of its traditional Passion Play, about 100 of the Catholic Theatre Guild of Richmond's members and Father O'Kane will visit New York April 18-19-20. On Saturday morning there will be a special Mass at Mother Cabrini's Shrine, and on Sunday at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

The Knights of Columbus in Dayton are sponsoring three performances by Dayton Blackfriars of THE UPPER ROOM during Holy Week.

Maxine Schlingman reports that John Tumpane's TRIANGLE (Given a premiere March 5 by St. Louis University's Workshop Group) is a powerful drama on the mother-son theme.

St. Ambrose College presented OUR TOWN at home Feb. 9-10, and on Feb. 16 played to the biggest audience the Grand Theatre at Keokuk, Iowa, had seen in its 20 years. Rev. F. E. Marlin and Ted Lehman assisted Charles Costello in directing.

Stars of previous shows turned directors at Saint Martin, Ohio, for the production of four one-act plays on Feb. 23 THE KING AND THE VOWELS, FIRE IN A PAPER (Chinese), FIRST SORROW (drama, Abraham Lincoln as a boy), and THE TOWN MOUSE AND HIS COUNTRY COUSIN (comedy), reports Alice Fitzpatrick, enthusiastic stage manager at School of Brown County Ursulines.

"GOD BRIM YOUR DAY WITH FAVORS"

This cheerful good morning is a line from Guibour, a Miracle Play of Our Lady in a translation made by Anna Sprague Macdonald from the Old French. Yvette Guilbert appeared in the Neighborhood Playhouse production in New York, 1919.

The play ends on Candlemas Day and includes a Mass episode, which distinguishes it from approximately forty other Miracle Plays in a collection celebrating the intervention of Our Lady, according to Miss Macdonald's preface.

